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elling 'force that makes for righteousness.' Outside ourselves is 'the ceaseless flow of energy and the rational intelligence that pervades it. . . .' That there should exist a 'law of Heaven and earth whose way is solid, substantial, vast, and unchanging' seems to imply an intelligence adequate to have made it so, and to comprehend it as a whole," etc. (p. 40).

On the whole the book is an interesting presentation of the pragmatic method as exemplified in the realm of science and in the conduct of life. It is particularly noteworthy in so far as it comes from one who speaks with the authority of the expert scientist. If it fails to comply with the conditions of the foundation, such failure does not detract from the wholesomeness of much of its logical spirit.

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THE LIFE OF RUSKIN. By E. T. Cook. London: George Allen & Co., 1911. 2 Vols. Pp. xxv, 540; xiv, 615.

RUSKIN: A STUDY IN PERSONALITY. By A. C. Benson. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911. Pp. 264.

As Mr. Cook justly laments, an attitude of 'we have got long past that now' prevails towards Ruskin's work nowadays; yet, with the possible exception of Carlyle, no English man of letters has so deeply influenced the general moral tone of his time. To understand this influence we must note that both Ruskin and Carlyle, unlike though they were in many ways, were united in a fundamental sympathy of antagonism to the world in general and to the orthodox English school of economists in particular. They are the leaders of the reaction against that complacent 'mid-Victorian' spirit, which died as the nineteenth century wore on, and whose death seemed to those that hated it to mean the rebirth of imagination and emotion in the treatment of human affairs. It is significant that they were both of lowland Scots stock,—an origin which secured for them both a large dose of deeply puritanical religious feeling. Their points of difference no doubt are striking. Carlyle was almost a peasant. Ruskin's parents were of humble origin, but his father was a successful wine merchant of literary and artistic tastes, who bequeathed to his son a

large fortune and a genuine *bourgeois* love, very alien to Carlyle, of elegance and refinement. Carlyle's up-bringing was spare and grim; Ruskin's coddled childhood was passed in a London suburb where evangelical strictness became almost graceful in an atmosphere of luxury. Carlyle never lost the dourness of his native hills; Ruskin was notable for accessibility and for suavity of address. Carlyle cared nothing for art; half Ruskin's life was talking and writing about beauty. Yet in the welter of London, iniquitous center of a coarsely material civilization, these two weary and tormented spirits knew themselves for kin, whereas with Rossetti, the true artist and worshiper of beauty, Ruskin quarreled definitely. Stormy passages there were. In the earlier days Carlyle fastened on the younger man as good a label as on any of those that he hated, "a bottle of beautiful soda-water." But as time passed they drew closer together, and to the second phase of Ruskin's work Carlyle gave whole-hearted approval. When his growls became too outrageous, Ruskin would throw his arms round the bear and lovingly protest, "Now, now, this is too bad!" So we find Carlyle writing (1869), "Many, many are the Phœbus Apollo celestial arrows you will have shot into the foul Pythons and poisonous abominable Megatheriums and Plesiosaurians that go staggering about, large as cathedrals, in our sunk epoch again"; and, in 1872, "No other man in England that I meet has in him the divine rage against iniquity, falsity, and baseness that Ruskin has, and that every man ought to have."

Carlyle's judgments were often enough wrong-headed, and we may be inclined not to take this one very seriously, so dim a figure has Ruskin become compared with Carlyle himself. One reason for this probably is that while Carlyle had something of that rugged Johnsonian greatness which makes personality survive in anecdotes and memoirs, Ruskin's character, though morally much more estimable, is too ethereal, too inhuman both in its weakness and its strength, to be permanently attractive. However that may be, he begins to suffer the common fate of the great writer who has reached the stage of collected editions: the imposing volumes are stacked on our shelves, and our ideas about him grow vague and fixed. In this case, if we mention him, it is usually with some irritation. We think of Ruskin art pottery, or of those bad-tempered little volumes,

“Mornings in Florence” and “St. Mark’s Rest,” which are still part of the less enlightened tourist’s equipment in Italy. Sometimes, as in fairness, we give him credit for discovering Turner, whereas in fact he by no means discovered Turner, but merely vindicated Turner’s later manner against the critics of the ’40’s. But persists on the whole a vision of a querulous dogmatist scolding ‘like a mad governess’ because we cannot fall in with his bitterly narrow religious views, or will not accept a definition of beauty which he has no sooner laid down than he upsets it by a contradictory definition; preaching stern morality in endless incoherent books while he rolls luxuriously through Europe in a post-chaise; as Professor at Oxford scandalizing audiences by a mixture of buffoonery and intolerance; founding a derided St. George’s Guild with badges and sham medieval titles of honor; finally in old age exchanging romantic letters with troops of May Queens. In short, the general impression left on our minds is a rather unpleasant one of extravagant sentimentality. We have moved into a different age where the celestial arrows seem to have lost their sting.

There is tragedy in this, because Ruskin’s life was both noble and useful, though it was full of failures, and absurd failures, too. Mr. Cook does not bring out this fact clearly enough. His volumes are perfectly candid, and contain, admirably marshaled, all the materials for forming an estimate of Ruskin’s genius; but they are no more than a good specimen of ordinary official biography, just but reverential, and not lively. Mr. Benson goes much deeper. It does not matter that the lectures which he has put together as a book are discursive and unpolished. They make delightful reading, and, above all, they fulfill the promise of their title, “A Study in Personality”; indeed, it would be hard to mention a more skilful performance in the way of sympathetic yet detached delineation of a great man’s character. Mr. Benson seems to agree with Tolstoy in thinking Ruskin one of the great forces of the nineteenth century, yet he does not minimize his failures or the element of the ludicrous in them. He notes Ruskin’s Scotch caninness and stiffness of backbone,—the very qualities which, when combined with an ardently emotional temperament, are apt to obliterate for their possessor the line between the sublime and the ridiculous. And as regards Ruskin’s fame as an art critic Mr. Benson does not mince matters. As a critic (and in this capacity he was most

imperiously dogmatic) he was incompetent, because ignorant and narrow-minded. True, he opened up many new and important fields, his great achievements in this line being, in addition to the defence of Turner, his launching of the Pre-Raphaelites and his discovery of Italian Gothic, of the Primitives, of Tintoret, and of Carpaccio. But his appreciations did not blaze out from any systematic study of beautiful things; they were, rather, accidental results of the deeper fires of his nature,—fires far other than the artist's or scholar's passion for beauty as such,—and consequently were quite erratic and arbitrary. His gaze, wherever he directed it, to the chiseling of a capital or the veined articulations of a leaf, had an extraordinary quality of patient and piercing observation. But he directed it on irrelevant principles. He was always thinking of God and duty. Hence, though he agreed with what Mazzini said of him,—that he had “the most analytical mind in Europe,”—his was the kind of analytical power which, though it may be necessary, is not sufficient to the making of a critic. The applause which greeted his art-criticism combined with his natural self-confidence to delude him on this head, the reason why the public respected his pronouncements about art being, as Mr. Benson well points out, partly that he connected art with religion and morality, and partly that he hit the popular taste for a show of system-making. “It is an ironical proof of the turn of the Anglo-Saxon reader for what may be called the book-keeping theory of literature, that it [the public] accepted Ruskin's art-teaching . . . because it was conveyed under the form of sub-divisions” (p. 133). The whole pretty business of classification is of course the merest child's-play; he said himself that he had great difficulty to keep the seven lamps of architecture from becoming eight or nine “or even quite a vulgar row of footlight,” and on the side of esthetic theory no one can now maintain that Ruskin's views have any value apart from their incidental suggestiveness. Nor has his teaching had any effect on the practical side of art. Except for his encouragement of the Pre-Raphaelites (themselves a flutter which has now subsided) he influenced no school of painting. With all his reputation he could not get the Turner drawings properly cared for. The frescoes with which he helped to decorate the Oxford Union have faded. The Oxford Museum, built under his supervision, was a failure. The whole apparatus

of his Gothic revival is lumber. Similarly, if we turn to the economic side of his work, that impracticable road, which he caused his Oxford students to build at Hinckley, is typical of the whole. Dickens's novels contributed to the improvement of workhouses and private schools; they helped to abolish Doctor's Commons and untrained sick-nurses; we may even trace to them in some measure the speeding-up of legal procedure and of the routine of government offices. No comparable reform of a practical nature can be directly connected with Ruskin, whose desire to improve the world was yet loftier and purer than that of Dickens. He was a pioneer of education among working-men, and Mr. Cook points out that he advocated many ideas which, thought mad at the time, have since been put into practice; for instance old-age pensions and universal elementary education. But meanwhile he was ridiculed as a visionary, and neither politicians nor the public paid any attention to his schemes of social welfare. The one definite plan for land reform and regeneration of the people which he actually floated, the St. George's Guild, scarcely pretended to be seaworthy, and foundered at once amid universal laughter. His most tangible success is, perhaps, a certain revolution in the bookselling trade, the establishment of the 'net book system,' which his popularity as a writer on art enabled him to bring about. Was Carlyle, then, deluded by personal sympathy when he saw him as a Phœbus Apollo transfixing poisonous Megatheriums?

The answer must be that Carlyle was right. Ruskin was a preacher and a prophet. He may not have succeeded in getting done any particular thing that was preëminently worth doing, yet, by published writings, by lecturing and teaching, by a constant flood of letters and by wide personal intercourse, he deeply affected English life in two ways: his zeal for righteousness pricked the consciences of large numbers of people, and his zeal for beauty in nature and art to some extent opened their eyes. The analysis of Turner's merits, the sermons of "Modern Painters," the theories of "The Stones of Venice" as to the relation between art and national morality, the economics (drawn from a study of Xenophon and Plato and Isaiah) of "Unto this Last,"—all this may be hopelessly incorrect, yet it did at every turn bring home to multitudes new images of goodness and beauty. We are a 'practical' people,

and it is fatally easy for us, even in the twentieth century, to stint municipal and national expenditure on art and education, and to count nothing good but what can be measured in terms of cash: it would have been much easier, had Ruskin never written. Surely it is a great thing to have made the British public even begin to take art seriously, and it is a greater thing to have infected many minds with a sense of the intolerable evil of modern industrial conditions. No writer has been so efficient in communicating both aspiration for high ideals and intense hatred of existing evils. And what made him efficient was his acquisition, by patient toil, of a style of such flexibility that it could range through every tone, from the bite of ironic denunciation, through pompous and measured rhetoric, to heights of lyrical splendor. In whatever respects he failed, in language he must be admitted to be an artist of that major breed which writes well not merely for the sake of writing well, but from an unquenchable sincerity without which no intricacy of word-painting will greatly move a large audience. And for a style to be really effective in England, it is not enough that it should spring from sincerity alone; that sincerity itself must be deep-rooted in religion and morality. With all his foibles Ruskin succeeded because he passionately desired that mankind should turn away from evil, and because he had the Bible not only in his mouth, but in his heart. Such a temperament, though it may fit a man to influence his generation, leads almost inevitably to self-torture and suffering which fame can hardly recompense. But I have no space to dwell on the inner tragedies of Ruskin's life; they are traced to their sources in Mr. Benson's book. A phrase of Manning's well expresses this background of pain: "*Fors Clavigera*," he said, was like listening to the beating of one's heart in a nightmare; and I will end by quoting a sentence from a letter of Ruskin's to C. E. Norton: "The peace in which I am at present is only as if I had buried myself in a tuft of grass on a battle-field wet with blood, for the cry of the earth about me is in my ears continually."

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